

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

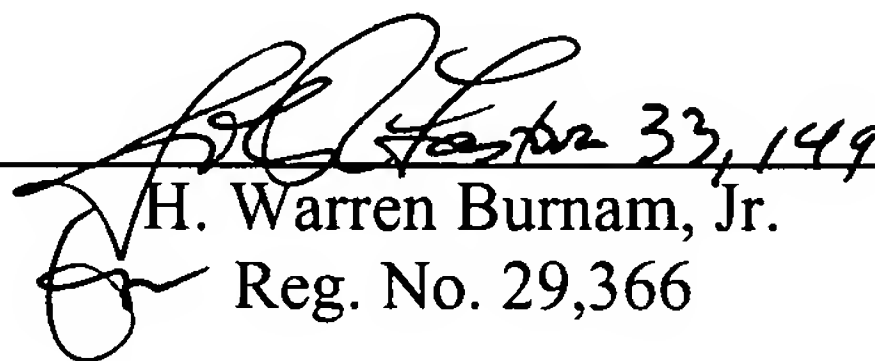
Early and favorable consideration of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested.

Original claims 1-16 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 1-17 have been added.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:

 33,149
H. Warren Burnam, Jr.
Reg. No. 29,366

HWB:lsh
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100